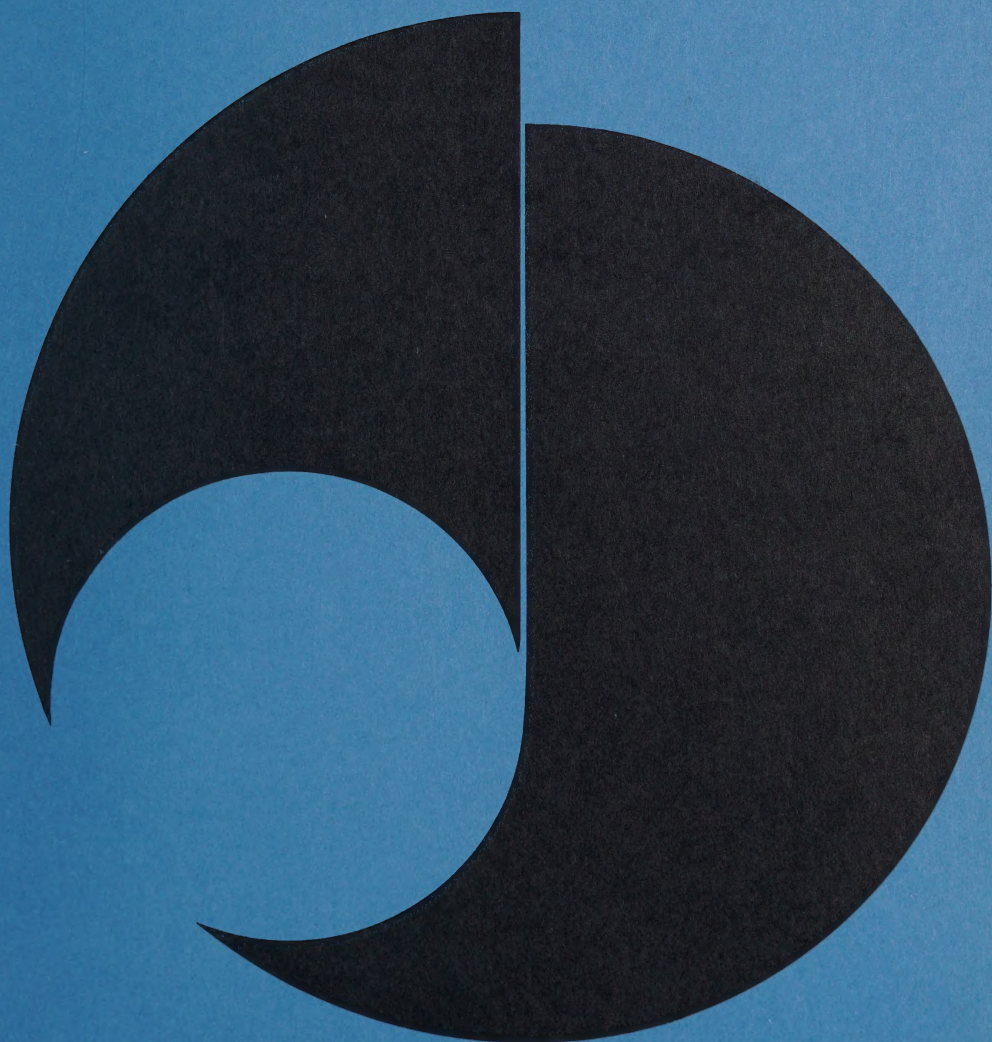


# handel & haydn society

## 159th season

Thomas Dunn, music director

3/15/74



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**ISRAEL IN EGYPT**  
I—EXODUS

INTERMISSION

II—MOSES' SONG

SOPRANO	SUE ELLEN KUZMA
	ELIZABETH PARCELLS
ALTO	PAMELA GORE
TENOR	FRANK HOFFMEISTER
BARITONE	ROBERT SHIESLEY
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## PROGRAM NOTES by Joseph Dyer

### HANDEL: Israel in Egypt

If *Messiah* stands apart from the mainstream of the Handelian dramatic oratorio, *Israel in Egypt* must be reckoned its companion. Human passions count for nothing on the canvas Handel spreads out before our eyes. As if to emphasize this impersonal quality Handel tips the balance toward choral writing at the expense of solos and duets. In the choruses he stresses the dramatic and the monumental rather than the lyric and the intimate. His subject, recounted exclusively in the words of Scripture, is the terrible wrath of Jehovah and the mighty deeds wrought on behalf of his people. Most of the choruses are for eight voices, a heritage of the Venetian style. Not a small chorus, but the full resources of the Handel and Haydn Society are demanded for the most powerful effect.

Handel's intentions in writing *Israel in Egypt* and the form it subsequently took have never been adequately explained. Just four days had elapsed since the completion of *Saul* when, on October 1, 1738, Handel set to work on a new subject. He began with Part II, "Moses' Song", and only after that had been finished was Part I, "Exodus" begun. This unusual procedure has led to speculation that he intended "Moses' Song" to stand alone as a large-scale anthem. From a dramatic point of view the two halves of *Israel* are to a certain extent redundant.

Handel intended to bring the work up to the normal three "acts" by prefacing it with the Funeral Anthem (1737) composed after the death of Queen Caroline. It was to have been called "The Lamentation of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph" and would have been a natural prologue to what is now the opening recitative of *Israel*. Handel eventually discarded the idea. As glorious as the Funeral Anthem is, its inclusion would have severely tried the patience of even the most rabid devotee of choral singing. All of the Handel oratorios begin with an instrumental introduction and one should be supplied here. An organ concerto is appropriate since the concertos were popular features of Handel's oratorio programs and it is known that he played one at the first performance of *Israel*.

The urgency with which he began *Israel in Egypt* and its completion within a month's time does not mean that it emanated from an unbroken flood of creative imagination. Handel needed to prod his creative processes many times. These "prods" took the form of quotations lifted from the works of other composers (and a few of his own earlier compositions) which he used as a springboard for embellishment and extension. This is not an infrequent practice for Handel but he never did it on quite the same scale.

Victorian England, concerned with the problem of originality and artistic integrity, was shocked. The critic Henry Fothergill Chorley, while unbounded in his enthusiasm for *Israel in Egypt* ("almost without paragon in its pomp and impressiveness") had to confess that Handel had been "unscrupulous" in levying the fruits of other composers' labors.

Nearly half of the oratorio is indebted in one way or another to someone else's music: Francesco Urio, Alessandro Stradella, Dionigi Erba, J. C. Kerll and Handel's teacher, Zachow. This controversy over "plagiarisms" hardly concerns the listener under Handel's spell, but it was long considered a topical matter for debate. If any embarrassment is involved then it is the composers of the model works who must bear it. A confrontation between Handel's most often considerable reworkings and the sources from which he drew is not exactly flattering to Stradella and company. To cite merely one example: the initial motives for Nos. 6 and 7 were borrowed from a *Serenata* by



Stradella but the working out is Handel's own—and to what effect! Though oft stated, the simple truth is that Handel payed back with handsome interest whatever he borrowed from others for *Israel in Egypt*.

Handel deployed all of his greatest resourcefulness to make *Israel in Egypt* “the greatest choral epic which exists” (R. Rolland). His many borrowings, whatever their cause, cannot be construed as a sign of diminished creative energies. He traverses a wide expressive range in the choral numbers. From the mighty strokes of “Who is like unto thee” to the archaic polyphony of “Egypt was glad” (after Kerll); from the terrifying exchanges of “He gave them hailstones” to the lyricism of “But as for his people”; from the extraordinary harmonic boldness of the choral recitative “He sent a thick darkness” to the dramatic forcefulness of “The people shall hear”—the greatest diversity is evident. There are even elements of cantus-firmus treatment. In the opening and closing choruses of Part II a stately Handelian theme parades through a mass of agitated counterpoints. Walter Serauky has pointed out a symbolic quotation of the Chorale “Christ lag in Todesbanden” embedded in the first chorus of the oratorio, a chorus bewailing the captivity of the Israelites.

Ironically, it was just this choral wealth which spelled failure for *Israel in Egypt* on April 4, 1739. An audience nurtured on the operatic aria and solo song did not take kindly to finding little more than a half dozen solos or duets in an evening's entertainment. The composer was not without his supporters, however. A letter of encomium appeared the next day in the London Daily Post. Handel supplied “alterations and additions” for a performance one week later but the oratorio never became one of his popular ones. After the failure of *Israel* Handel abandoned the composition of oratorios and seemed to be veering toward Italian opera again. He was called back to his true path eventually by the request from Dublin in 1741 which resulted in the composition of *Israel's* successor, *Messiah*.

## I EXODUS

Recitative Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph;  
Tenor and he set over Israel taskmasters to afflict them with burdens,  
and they made them serve with rigor.

Chorus And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and  
their cry came up unto God. They oppressed them with burdens  
and made them serve with rigor; and their cry came up unto God.

Recitative Then sent he Moses, his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen;  
Tenor these shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.  
He turned their waters into blood.

Chorus They loathed to drink of the river. He turned their waters into blood.

Air Their land brought forth frogs, yea even in their king's chambers.  
Alto He gave their cattle over to the pestilence; blotches and blains  
broke forth on man and beast.

Chorus He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies and lice  
in all their quarters.  
He spake; and the locusts came without number, and devoured  
the fruits of the ground.  
He gave them hailstones for rain; fire mingled with the hail ran  
along upon the ground.  
He sent a thick darkness over the land, even darkness which might  
be felt.  
He smote all the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength.  
But as for his people, he led them forth like sheep:  
He brought them out with silver and gold; there was not one feeble  
person among their tribes.  
Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them fell upon them.  
He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up.  
He led them through the deep as through a wilderness.  
But the waters overwhelmed their enemies, there was not one  
of them left.  
And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians;  
and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his  
servant Moses.

## II MOSES' SONG

Chorus Moses and the children of Israel sung this song unto the Lord, and  
spake, saying: I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed  
gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Duet The Lord is my strength and my song;  
Sopranos He is become my salvation.



Chorus He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation;  
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Duet The Lord is a man of war: Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots  
Basses and his host hath he cast into the sea; his chosen captains  
also are drowned in the Red Sea.

Chorus The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.  
Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power;  
thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.  
And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them  
that rose up against thee.  
Thou sendest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.  
And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,  
the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed  
in the heart of the sea.

Air The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;  
Tenor my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword,  
my hand shall destroy them.

Air Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them;  
Soprano they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Chorus Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee,  
glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?  
Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

Duet Thou in thy mercy hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed;  
Alto and Tenor thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

Chorus The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on them:  
all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away; by the greatness of  
thy arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over,  
O Lord, which thou hast purchased.

Air Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of  
Alto thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for  
thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands  
have established.

Chorus The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.  
and Soloists For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his  
horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters  
of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry  
land in the midst of the sea.  
The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.  
And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel  
in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels  
and with dances. And Miriam answered them:  
Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

**SUE ELLEN KUZMA** is a graduate of Ithaca College and holds a Master's Degree from the New England Conservatory. She has been a soloist with the Cantata Singers, the Masterworks Chorale and the Emmanuel Church Choir. Her experience in opera includes roles with the New England Chamber Opera Group, Associate Artists Opera Company, and in the Handel and Haydn Society's recent production *Postcard From Morocco*.

**ELIZABETH PARCELLS** tonight makes her debut with the Handel and Haydn Society. She is an alumna of the Interlochen Arts Academy and a senior at the New England Conservatory, studying voice with Mark Pearson. She is a regular soloist at Boston's King's Chapel.

**PAMELA GORE** holds a B. A. degree from Swarthmore College and a M. Mus. from the New England Conservatory. Among the many choral groups for whom she has been soloist are the Oratorio Society of New York, the Chorus Pro Musica, the Cantata Singers, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium. She has sung many times with the Handel and Haydn Society—this year she was a soloist in *Les Noces* and *Postcard From Morocco*.

**FRANK HOFFMEISTER** holds a Master's Degree from the New England Conservatory. He has sung locally with the Opera Company of Boston, Associate Artists Opera Company, the Castle Hill Festival Series, the Chorus Pro Musica and others. This winter he sang in a world premiere at McGill University in Montreal and appeared at Alice Tully Hall with the Cambridge Consort.

**FRANCIS HESTER**, who sang the bass role in the Society's production of *Postcard From Morocco*, has performed extensively in opera and oratorio. In Boston, besides singing with the Handel and Haydn Society, he has performed with the Chorus Pro Musica and the Boston Symphony Youth Concerts. Elsewhere, he has performed with the Buffalo Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Chamber Opera Society of Baltimore, and the Denver Lyric Opera.

**ROBERT SHIESLEY** has sung with the Handel and Haydn Society in *Les Noces*, the Rossini Mass, and the *Saint Matthew* and *Saint John Passions*. Other of his recent activities include appearances with the New York Philharmonic under Pierre Boulez, the Boston Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, and the Houston Grand Opera.

**DANIEL PINKHAM**, versatile American composer, has taught at Boston University and was Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University (1957-58). In 1950 he received a Fulbright Fellowship and in 1962 a Ford Foundation Fellowship. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is presently on the faculty of The New England Conservatory, and Music Director of historic King's Chapel.



**Membership in the Handel and Haydn Society** is open to the public and as the current renaissance of the Society continues, it is becoming more and more important for us to count on the support of a diverse and discerning group of people.

A contribution of ten dollars or more enables you not only to support the Society financially, but also to have a unique contact with the inner workings of a musical organization. Members may become as involved as they like. There is, for instance, an annual meeting, at which board members are elected from the Society at large. In addition, members are given special consideration in seating for all the concerts. From time to time, as well, there are open rehearsals and lecture-demonstrations at which interested members may take a closer look at how a concert, opera, ballet, or other program is put together.

We regard the Membership of the Society as a bellwether of sorts. Through the response of our members—critical, enthusiastic, indifferent—we are able to gauge the effect our musical activities are having on the general public.

Though the concert year ends tonight, the Society needs new contributors in order to meet its obligations for the season just past. If you have enjoyed tonight's concert, and our other concerts this year, we would welcome and appreciate your support.

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HANDEL & HAYDN SOCIETY

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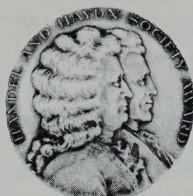
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## THE HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY MEDAL



*Front*



*Back*

### The Award Medal

The Handel and Haydn Society Medal was established in November, 1971 for the purpose of recognizing meritorious achievement in the art and performance of music.

Recipients of the Medal are elected by the Society's Board of Governors and may be performers, performing organizations, composers, music administrators or educators, patrons, or other groups or individuals who have advanced the cause of music.

Policies governing the Medal stipulate that the recipients must not be selected solely because of their current popularity or fame. They may be active or retired, and the Medal may be presented posthumously.

The Award Medal is approximately 2½ inches in diameter, is made of sterling silver, and is a modified replica of the bronze medallion that was struck to commemorate the Society's centennial in 1915. The face of the medal bears the words Handel and Haydn Society Award and the profiles of the two composers after whom the Society is named. The back of the medal bears the old seal of the Society, below which is engraved the name of the recipient and the date of the presentation of the Award.

Design modifications and manufacture of the Award Medal were carried out by L. G. Balfour Company, Attleboro, Massachusetts.

The Medal was first awarded in 1972 to the distinguished Swiss tenor Hugues Cuenod. The 1974 recipient is Renée Longy, to whom the medal will be presented immediately following the conclusion of tonight's concert.



RENEE LONGY was born in France. Her father, Georges Longy, started giving her solfège lessons when she was five and soon started her on the piano and the oboe. At the age of twelve, she was taken to boarding school in Paris, where she studied advanced solfège and Dalcroze eurythmics.

In 1914, the Longy family moved to the United States, Georges Longy becoming first oboist with the Boston Symphony. Mme. Longy began her teaching career at the New England Conservatory in 1914, and subsequently moved on to be director of the Longy School in Cambridge, which her father founded in 1915.

In 1926, she created a solfège department at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and while there she founded the Twentieth Century Music Group, dedicated to the propagation of twentieth century chamber music. She has been on the faculties of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, the New School of Music in Philadelphia, and the University of Miami School of Music, always a champion of the solfège method, and always the prime mover behind concerts of contemporary chamber music.

In 1974 Mme. Longy celebrates her sixtieth year as a teacher. She is currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School in New York. During her long career, she has written two books, *Principles of Music Theory* (1924) and *Music Fundamentals* (1932), and has enjoyed concurrent success as a performer. She made her piano debut in Boston in 1916, and has appeared with the MacDowell Orchestra, the Philadelphia Symphonietta, the Boston Symphony, and others.

The citation which accompanies the Handel and Haydn Society Award reads as follows:

*Patient with the slow to learn, beloved holy terror of the gifted,  
Renée Longy, through sixty years has been an ebullient exponent of Gallic  
method and mode and has held a mirror of self-knowledge to three generations  
of incipient musicians, that they see their skills not as they are but as they  
might be.*

*Wherefore, in the name of the Society, the Governors confer upon her the  
Medal of the Handel and Haydn Society and hereby declare her an Honorary  
Member of the same.*

*Given at Boston, Massachusetts, in the 160th year of the Society, this 15th  
day of March, 1974.*

*There will be a reception for Madame Longy in the Cabot-Cabners Room after the  
concert. For those without pre-paid reservations, the admission is \$6 and may be paid  
at the door.*

*Events such as the  
Handel and Haydn Society  
Concerts bring us together by  
the communication of beauty  
through the art of music.*



New England Telephone

---

*From harmony, from  
heavenly harmony  
This universal frame began:  
From harmony  
to harmony  
Through all the compass  
of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing  
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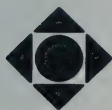


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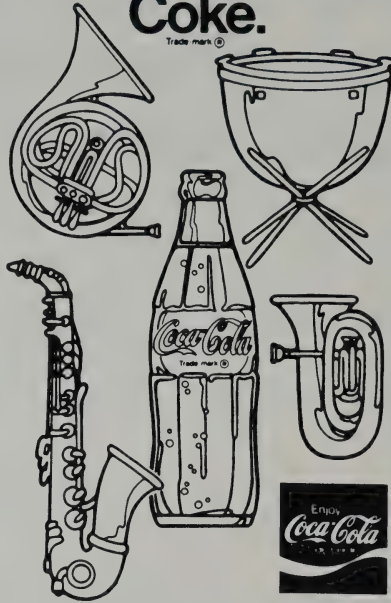
*Virgil. Aeneid, XI, 283*



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# Handel & Haydn Soc 159th season

Thomas Dunn, r

## HANDEL ISRAEL IN EGYPT

The theme of Handel's *Israel in Egypt* is, of course, the story of the Exodus from Egypt, culminating in the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

Though seldom performed lately, it is considered by many to be one of Handel's greatest oratorios. It is an awesome and difficult work. Not until 1859, 120 years after the composition of the work and 44 years after the founding of the Handel & Haydn Society, did the Society attempt the first complete performance in America. Even then, the Society's efforts did not garner unanimous accolades of the critics:

What could possibly induce the Handel and Haydn Society to turn body catchers and snatch this decently interred old thing from its well-secured repose? Why not let those poor old Egyptians and Israelites rest quiet in their sarcophogi, instead of exhuming their musty remains and forcing us to hark from their tombs a doleful cry on their plagues and sorrows?

One grand announcement made by the whole tribe is that 'the people shall hear and be afraid.' Here is a certain fact! For those who hear these lugubrious sorrows of flea-bitten Egyptians and itinerant Israelites will surely be mortally afraid to hear them repeated...Seek not to inoculate the life of 1859 with the blotches and blains which bother the whole medical faculty of Egypt. *Boston Transcript*

We ascribe this review, naturally, to a failure in the critic's perception rather than to any failure of the composer or the performers. The popularity of the work has varied in direct proportion to the popularity of choral singing, principally because *Israel in Egypt* contains a higher proportion of choruses to solos than any other of Handel's oratorios. It is, in fact, the variety of choral textures and the virtuosity of the choral writing in general that places the work so high in the ranks of Handel's writings. That the Boston critic was not speaking for all places and times is evidenced by the fact that *Israel in Egypt* was the sensation of the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in London, also in 1859.

That the work does not appeal equally to all listeners is perhaps best explained by a comment in a letter written by Mrs. Delaney after attending a performance conducted by Handel in 1756. She pronounced the work "too lofty for common ears." Far be it from the Handel & Haydn Society to dispute Mrs. Delaney.



**ety**

director



## Israel in Egypt

March 15, 1974

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Symphony Hall

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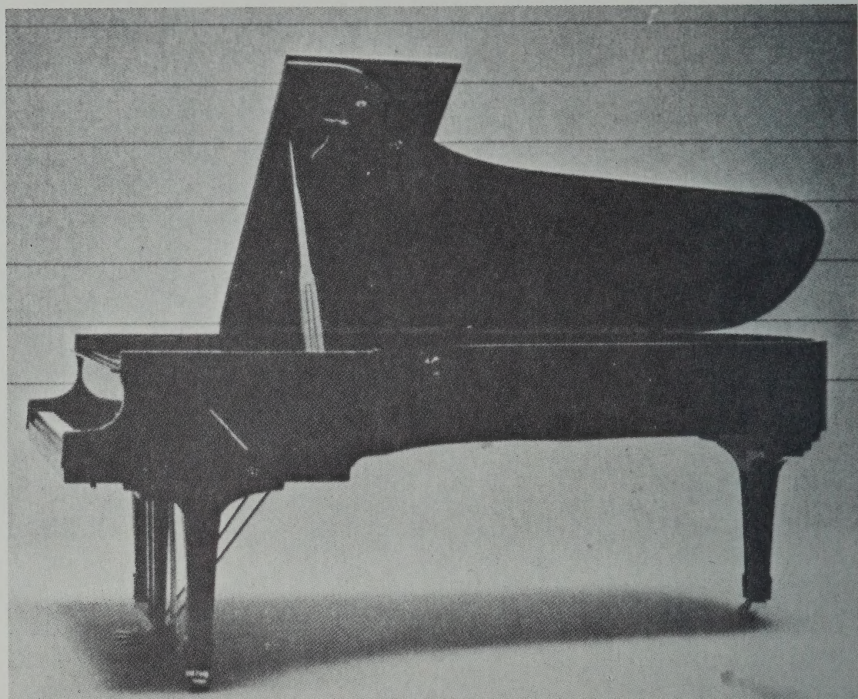
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